

**No. R-35. House concurrent resolution honoring departing Rutland City Police Chief James Baker for his superb leadership in challenging circumstances.**

(H.C.R.19)

Offered by: Representatives Russell of Rutland City, Cupoli of Rutland City, Fagan of Rutland City, and Gage of Rutland City

Offered by: Senators Collamore, Flory, and Mullin

Whereas, departing Rutland City Police Chief James Baker was concluding his distinguished tenure as a Vermont State Police Colonel and the State force's director, as the city of Rutland was experiencing a sharp rise in the amount of opiate addiction and a disturbing increase in crime, and

Whereas, simultaneously, a number of Rutland City police officers' extremely unprofessional conduct was embarrassing the department and lowering its morale, and

Whereas, in search of a person to overhaul the department, and to address the city's intertwined drug and law enforcement dilemmas, the city of Rutland persuaded Colonel Baker to accept this challenge, and

Whereas, unlike as a State Police Colonel, Chief Baker discovered the need for his direct involvement in many community and departmental issues, and

Whereas, for the department, he rewrote mission statements, core values, and policy manuals, and

Whereas, with respect to the city, Chief Baker endeavored to reestablish the department's credibility and effectiveness, and

Whereas, he had to engage directly with angry city residents who were upset with the city's crime problems, and

Whereas, on examining the city's situation, Chief Baker's views on the city's drug epidemic evolved to include supporting a methadone clinic for opiate addiction and assisting the addicted while still holding them legally accountable for their actions, and

Whereas, perhaps his most important initiative was devising a community intervention program that became Project Vision, encompassing nonprofit organizations, social service groups, and individuals, and

Whereas, as a first step, Chief Baker needed to serve a collaborative role to bring together organizations that were not necessarily on speaking terms, and

Whereas, although Chief Baker, who has recently accepted a senior position with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, assigned most of the credit for Project Vision's positive impact to others, he has stated that treating people with dignity and respect was essential, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors departing Rutland City Police Chief James Baker for his superb leadership in challenging circumstances, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to James Baker and the Rutland City Police Department.